

Signs

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Missoula County, Lake County, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) need to develop a coordinated approach to signage for the Reservation, which expresses a unique identity for the US 93 corridor. Promoting continuity and a sense of unity throughout the Reservation should be a major objective. The consistent and systematic use of signage and details should permit visitors to identify individual functions and services and to differentiate between them. These guidelines are intended to be the first step in this coordinated approach, with the final color, size, font, text, mounting height and style, materials, and locations to be developed for each sign type.

- Keep the message of a sign simple enough to serve its purpose, which is to provide direction and to let travelers know where they are and what they are seeing. Because the majority of roads on the Reservation have speed limits higher than 45 miles per hour, the traveler has about 3 seconds to grasp the message on the sign. If the sign's intent is to provide travelers with a sense of the Reservation's character, it needs to be simple enough for people to quickly identify the design. Use only a minimal amount of text with bold and simple lettering and a large clean design that is not too busy or complex. Avoid using script because it is usually difficult to read. Contrasting colors with light images on dark background and vice-versa make signs easier to read.
- Trademark any new logos, shapes, or symbols developed specifically for signs in order to limit usage.
- Allow on-premise signage to continue in accordance with governing regulations.

Establish a recognizable hierarchy of signage to distinguish subtle differences between similar functions. Consistently use a hierarchy of sign types in order to give visitors the necessary visual cues. For this project, 6 basic types of signage are identified: (1) portal/boundary signs, (2) community entry signs, (3) official highway signs, (4) place name signs, (5) tourist oriented signs, and (6) interpretive signs.

Graphic logos -- such as the one depicting Coyote, legendary hero of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille people -- should be trademarked.

